DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 273 EC 101 861

AUTHOR Sallop, Marvin B.; Butler, John W.
TITLE Itinerant Teachers of the Hearing Impaired: What Do They Really Do?
PUB DATE 30 Jun 77
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf (Los Angeles, California, June 30, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Aurally Handicapped; *Delivery Systems; Elementary Secondary Education; Exceptional Child Research; *Itinerant Teachers; *Personnel Data; Program Effectiveness; Surveys; *Teacher Role; Teaching Load

ABSTRACT

A three-phase study involving data on itinerant services delivered, school personnel perspectives on itinerant services, and survey data from regional program personnel, was conducted with five selected itinerant teachers and 70 hearing impaired elementary and secondary level day school students receiving services. Each of the Ss were observed during a random teaching day and each teacher responded to a survey on numbers of students served, mileage traveled, and other itinerant load characteristics. Among findings of the study were that the average teacher spends 22 hours a week in 7.6 different schools serving 12 students whom the teacher visits on an average of twice a week; that students are of all ages and all grades and classes, including educable mentally retarded, trainable mentally retarded, and resource classes; that the itinerant teacher is viewed as an important and vital educational element by district personnel; and that the teachers feel alienated, not belonging to any particular school. (IM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED144273

ITINERANT TEACHERS OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED: WHAT DO THEY REALLY DO?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

by

Marvin B. Sallop, M.A.
Educational Program Director
Gulf Coast
Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
2472 Bolsover, Suite 440
Houston, Texas 77005

and

John W. Butler, Ph.D.
Superintendent
North Texas
Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
402 Citizens Bank Building
Richardson, Texas 75080

Presented at the
Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf
Los Angeles, California
June 30, 1977

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Marvin B. Sallop

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

EC101861

ITINERANT TEACHERS OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED: WHAT DO THEY REALLY DO?

Marvin B. Sallop, M.A.
John W. Butler, Ph.D.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Program History

In 1973, the Texas Legislature mandated a comprehensive statewide program to serve hearing impaired students through the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf. Texas was apportioned into five regions, each headed by a regional superintendent reporting directly to a state director of education for the deaf.

The Gulf Coast Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, one of the five, was implemented in the fall of 1975. The first year gave attention to the development of management and coordinating systems to pull together 23 separate independent school district programs into eight component programs of the Regional Day School Program. These 23 separate programs for the deaf ranged in size from a large county-wide program located in Houston with 380 students to isolated public school classes, the smallest consisting of only 4 students.

The first year also focused on the development of program designs and staffing patterns. While additional instructional and supportive staff were employed, staff in the existing 23 programs were incorporated into the Regional Program. Some public schools had provided services through self-contained classes, some through resource classes, some through itinerant teachers, and some through a combination of these.

The program design for the Regional Program adopted a needs cascade philosophy to serve 724 students the first year. Resources would be designed to meet individual student needs along a continuum of services. One essential element of this design was services to hearing impaired students in regular education circumstances, or mainstreamed students, provided by an itinerant teacher. The itinerant staff contained certified teachers of the deaf and speech pathologists serving as itinerant teachers of the deaf.

B. The ARD Process

In Texas special education students, including deaf students, are assigned to an educational circumstance by a legal process known as an ARD (Admissions, Review and Dismissal). Three areas are represented on the ARD committee: instruction, administration, and assessment. In many instances, parents are invited to participate in ARD committee meetings. Assessment data is used to identify student needs and to refer a student to the appropriate program possessing the resources to meet the student's needs. One such service option is itinerant services for the hearing impaired supplied by a component program of the Gulf Coast Regional Day School Program for the Deaf.

Each of the 67 independent school districts which refer students to the Regional Program have ARD committees functioning on building as well as on districtwide levels. In addition, each of the eight component regional programs manage students through ARD committees of their own. Thus it is through the ARD process that students are enrolled for itinerant services.

C. The Need for Itinerant Information

Having spent the first operational year establishing management and coordinating systems, it was time to focus on service delivery systems. Itinerant services was one of the areas that needed attention. Component programs began planning for the second operational year to serve 883 students, an increase of 159 students. Among the additional personnel requested were itinerant teachers. There were differences of opinion among the different ARD committees, regional component program administrators, independent school district administrators, and even among itinerant teachers concerning the role of the itinerant teacher, the qualifications and training of the itinerant teacher, and the very nature of the services to be delivered.

With the request to establish new itinerant teaching positions, in-depth perspectives needed to be gained concerning the nature of itinerant services. Several other questions needed resolution. What is a reasonable weekly mileage for itinerant teachers? How many students could an itinerant teacher serve? What are the characteristics of hearing impaired itinerant students? What training and certification should an itinerant teacher possess? What do ARD committees expect when they refer and admit a student for itinerant services?

Answers to these and other questions yielded both hard data in the nature of observable and measurable facts and soft data in the nature of personal feelings and perspectives of professionals responsible for referring, enrolling, and serving itinerant students. Their perspectives needed to be understood since these were the perspectives which shaped the nature

of itinerant services.

D. Methodology

An itinerant services study was designed in three phases. The first consisted of observation and data collection of the actual itinerant services delivered, itinerant teacher loads, and characteristics of the student population receiving services.

The second phase of the study consisted of surveying public school and ARD committee personnel with open ended questions to elicit feelings and perspectives from their frame of reference about the nature of itinerant services.

The third phase consisted of surveying regional program personnel with open ended and specific questions to elicit both perspectives concerning itinerant services as well as data on actual services provided.

It was assumed that a tabulation of frequency responses would identify specific areas of differences in perspectives and serve to guide future training and orientation activities. Specific data would be tabulated and standards would be established to guide decision makers for both immediate staffing pattern requests and for designing service delivery systems as the Regional Program continued to develop.

The itinerant study was to be a randomly selected survey. Five of the ten itinerant teachers were to be observed and data recorded concerning their activities, the characteristics of their students and their teaching loads. Perspectives would be gathered from their regional component administrator, their students' home district administrators, and the

members of the ARD committees which recommended and admitted these particular students for itinerant services.

E. Sample Group

The Gulf Coast Regional Day School Program for the Deaf enrolled 883 students in its eight component programs. Of these 883 students, 131 or 14.8% of the students had been identified for itinerant services. Five or 50% of the itinerant teachers were randomly selected to participate in this study. They had a service load of 70 students or 53.4% of the 131 students receiving itinerant services. These 70 students provided the itinerant load characteristics for their five teachers. In addition, each of the five teachers were observed during a randomly selected day providing services to 41 students. This observation and information concerning these 41 observed students provided data for itinerant student characteristics. These students represent 58.5% of the student load of the five participating itinerant teachers.

II. ITINERANT LOAD CHARACTERISTICS

The first part of the study sought to gain information concerning the characteristics of the itinerant teacher's load. Each of the subjects were observed during a random teaching day. In addition, each itinerant teacher responded to a survey designed to elicit specific information concerning numbers served, mileage traveled, and other itinerant load characteristics.

A. Student Numbers

TABLE 1.

Students Being Served

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Number of Students	8	8	16	21	17

How many students were being served by each itinerant teacher? Table 1 indicates that the number of students served by the itinerant teachers ranged from eight students (A and B) to twenty-one students (D). The average teaching load for teachers represented in this survey was fourteen students.

Teacher D was working in a program which had an itinerant teacher vacancy; consequently, students on the vacant service load were served by other teachers. The program supervisor projected a service load of fourteen students for teacher D when the vacant itinerant teacher position was filled. This would then bring the average teaching load to 12.5 students.

TABLE 2.

Manageable Student Load

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Teacher Response	10	15	13	10	12
Supervisor Response	8	10	8	10	12
Present Teaching Load	8	8	16	21	17

How many students should be served by each itinerant teacher? Itinerant teachers and their supervisors were asked to identify what they considered to be a manageable teaching load. As Table 2 indicates, itinerant teachers suggested that they could serve as many or more students than their supervisors thought they could. It is also interesting to note that the teachers with the lesser loads (A and B) felt they could serve more students than they were serving while the teachers with the greater loads (C, D, and E) suggested smaller teaching loads. Interestingly, teachers D and E and their program supervisors suggested identical student loads. Teacher perceptions ranged between 10 - 15 students for an average teaching load of 12 students and supervisor perceptions ranged between 8 - 12 students for an average teaching load of 9.6 students.

B. Mileage

TABLE 3.

Student/Mile Ratio

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Number of Students	8	8	16	21	17
Weekly Miles	80	75	150	150	130
Student/Mile Ratio	1:10	1:9.4	1:9.4	1:7.1	1:7.4

Do the number of miles influence the number of itinerant students that can be served? Table 3 shows that the weekly mileage driven by the itinerant teachers ranged from 75 miles to 150 miles, or twice the lowest weekly mileage. In computing a student/mile ratio, it was noted that

regardless of the actual mileage traveled by the itinerant teacher, the student/mile ratio tended to closely group from seven to ten miles per student for an average of 8.7 weekly miles per student.

An assumption one could make concerning mileage could be that the more mileage an itinerant teacher must travel, the smaller the number of students could be served by that teacher. This study did not support this assumption. The teachers with the greater numbers of weekly miles to travel (C,D, & E) also had the greater numbers of students on their service loads. Distance or mileage covered by the itinerant route, while certainly an important consideration, proved not to be a major factor concerning the total number of students served.

It is assumed that beyond a certain mileage figure, the total number of students which could be served by the itinerant teacher would begin to diminish. This point of diminishing return was not identified by this study.

TABLE 4.

Mileage and School Sites

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Weekly Miles	80	75	150	150	130
Number of Schools	6	6	9	9	8
School/Mileage Ratio	1:13.3	1:12.5	1:16.7	1:16.7	1:16.3

How many school sites are served by the itinerant teacher and do they influence the mileage driven by the teacher? Teachers served between 6 to 9 separate school sites with an average of 7.6 different schools. This translated to a school/mileage ratio which ranged from 12.5 to 16.7 miles per school with an average of 15.2 miles per school site. As could be expected, the more sites served, the more mileage the itinerant teacher traveled to serve students.

C. Student Service Time

TABLE 5.

Student Contact Ratio

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Number of Students	8	8	16	21	17
Student Contact Hours	22	21	17.5	30.5	25.5
Student Contact Ratio	1:2.8	1:2.6	1:1.1	1:1.5	1:1.5

Is student service contact time influenced by the number of students assigned to the itinerant teacher's service load? The most important elements in the program design for itinerant services were the actual services provided as well as the actual student contact time in which these services were provided. Table 5 indicates that the itinerant teachers who served the greater number of students and traveled the greater number of weekly mileage (C, D, and E) also had more overall student contact hours. Their time spent per student averaged just a

little over one hour a week with each student. On the other hand, the teachers with the smaller student loads and who traveled less mileage (A and B) had more service time per student, a little over two and a half hours weekly with each student or more than twice that of teachers C, D, and E.

TABLE 6.

Weekly Contact Time

Weekly Contact	1/2 hr.	45 min.	1 hr.	1 1/2 hr	2 hr.	2 1/2 hr.
Number of Students	4	2	26	4	23	2
Percent of Students	5.7%	2.8%	37.5%	5.7%	32.8%	2.8%

Weekly Contact	3 hr.	4 hr.	6 hr.	8 hr.	10 hr.	by appt.
Number of Students	1	1	1	1	3	2
Percent of Students	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	4.3%	2.8%

What is the weekly student contact time? As shown by Table 6, fifty-three students or 76% received one to two hours of weekly service. Thirty-two or 45% of the students received two or more hours of weekly service. Six students or 8.5% received less than one hour of service weekly and two students or 2.8% received services by appointment or on an as needed basis.

TABLE 7.

Daily Contact Time

Duration of Contacts

Number of Weekly Contacts	30 min.	45 min.	1 hr.	1 1/2 hr.	2 hr.	Total	Percentage
1	3	2	8			13	18.5%
2	21	8	12		1	42	60%
3		1	1			2	2.8%
4	4	1		3	1	9	12.8%
5	2					2	2.8%
						68	
					by appt.	2	2.8%
					TOTAL	70 Students	

How often each week do students receive services and for how long at each contact? Table 7 indicates that while 13 students or 18.5% receive the services of the itinerant teacher once a week for periods ranging from 30 minutes to one hour, 55 students or 89% are seen at least twice a week for periods ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours each service day. Forty-two students or 60% receive itinerant services twice a week for periods ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Three of the five itinerant teachers commented on the survey that they were serving students who, in their opinion, would be better served in a self contained or resource class as well as serving students who were not in need of special education services. During a follow up interview to ascertain why these students were on their service loads, the teachers responded that the students had been assigned to them by either the school

district or the program ARD committee for a variety of reasons for which the itinerant teachers did not concur. They, consequently, adjusted their schedules to provide more service time to students whom they believe to belong in self contained classes and less service time to those whom they believed not to be in need of service.

TABLE 8.

Teacher Weekly Direct Services

Teacher	A	B	C	D^1	D^2	E
Contact hours	22	21	17.5	30.5	23.5	25.5
School Week Percentage	73%	70%	58%	102%	78%	85%

What portion of the teacher's work week is spent in direct service to students? Table 8 indicates that of a 30 hour school week, the itinerant teacher spent between 17.5 and 30.5 hours in direct service to students. This averaged to 78% or 23.3 hours a week in direct contact with students.

Teacher D^1 was working in a program which had an itinerant teacher vacancy and had temporarily assumed a portion of the vacant teacher's load. The program supervisor projected a service load of fourteen students for teacher D^2 requiring 23.5 hours of weekly service. This would then indicate that of a 30 hour week, between 17.5 and 25.5 hours a week would be spent in services to students with an average of 73% or 21.9 hours a week in direct student contact.

III. ITINERANT STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

During the observation stage of this itinerant study, 41 students of a possible 70 students were observed for one instructional day. The purpose was to observe the actual services provided during a randomly selected service day for each of the five itinerant teachers participating in this study. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to each component program requesting data to identify the characteristics of the students observed receiving itinerant services. The information of particular concern was the ages of the students, the classes or regular assignment, the level of academic functioning by standardized achievement test, the nature of the student's hearing, and the student's communication preference.

A. Age and Grade

TABLE 9.

Student Age Distribution

	Elementary						Secondary						
Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of Students	1	2	4	1	0	7	5	5	5	3	3	4	1

As shown by Table 9, 15 or 36.6% of students receiving itinerant services were of elementary age (6 - 11) while 26 or 63.4% of the students were of secondary age (12 - 18).

TABLE 10.

Grade/Class Distribution

	Elementary							Secondary						Special			
Grade/Class	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TMR	EMR	MHC	Resource
No. of Students	1	1	3	1	0	9	3	5	3	5	3	1	0	3	1	1	1

Table 10 shows that 18 or 44% of the students were attending elementary classes (grades 1 - 6). Seventeen or 41.5% of the students were attending secondary classes (grades 7 - 12). Three or 7% of the students were placed in Trainable Mentally Retarded classes. One or 2% of the students was attending Educable Mentally Retarded classes. One or 2% of the students was served in a resource class.

TABLE 11.

Age/Grade Distribution

	Elementary		Secondary		Other	
	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage
Age	15	36.6%	24	58.5%	2	5%
Grade	18	44%	17	41%	6	14.5%

As indicated by Table 11, while students receiving itinerant services were equally divided into elementary and secondary grades, a larger portion (24 students or 58.5%) were of secondary age (12 - 18 years old).

This would appear to indicate that some of the hearing impaired students receiving itinerant services were being placed in school grades below that of their hearing peers.

B. Audiological Information

TABLE 12.

Better Ear Average (Unaided)

Hearing * Loss	Normal (0-25 dB)	Mild (26-45 dB)	Moderate (46-65 dB)	Severe (66-90 dB)	Profound (91-110+ dB)	No Info.
No. of Students	5	11	11	2	8	4
Percentage	12%	27%	27%	5%	20%	10%

Table 12 shows that students possessed hearing losses in all ranges of hearing with 22 or 54% of the students possessing a mild to moderate loss and 10 or 24% of the students possessing a severe to profound loss. Five students or 12% showed better ear averages in the normal range; however, no data was collected for losses in the poorer ear. Audiological information was not available for 4 students or 10%; one student of the four was reported as being untestable.

TABLE 13.

Aided Speech Reception Threshold

S.R.T.	Not Available	No Hearing Aid	Could Not Determine	Normal 0-25dB	Mild 26-45dB	Moderate 46-65dB	Severe 65-90dB	Profound 91-100dB
No. of Students	7	13	2	6	8	2	2	1
Percentage	17%	32%	5%	15%	20%	5%	5%	2%

Table 13 indicates that 2 students or 5% reported normal aided speech reception thresholds, 6 students or 15% reported mild speech reception thresholds, 2 students or 5% reported moderate speech reception thresholds, 2 students or 5% reported severe reception thresholds, and 1 student or 2% reported a profound speech reception threshold. Programs reported that they did not have speech reception information about 22 students or 54%. Of these, 13 students or 32% did not own a hearing aid and 2 students or 5% were untestable. As for the remaining 7 students or 17%, for which information was not available, the students were not given aided speech reception threshold assessments as part of their audiological evaluations.

TABLE 14.

Hearing Aid Data

Type of Data	Yes		No		Do Not Know	
	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage
Students' Have Hearing Aid	27	66%	14	34%	0	0
Student's Use Hearing Aid	21	51%	19	46%	1	2%

As Table 14 indicates, 27 students or 66% had hearing aids and of these, 21 or 51% of the students regularly used their hearing aids. Fourteen students or 34% did not own a hearing aid.

C. Communication Information

TABLE 15.

Student Communication Preference

Modality	Signs Only	Oral/Aural	Total Communication	No Communication
No. of Students	1	31	7	2
Percentage	2%	76%	17%	5%

The student preferred communication mode as shown by Table 15 indicates that 31 students or 76% were oral/aural and 7 students or 17% were total communicators. One student or 2% used signs only. While data indicates that 2 students or 5% had no communication skills, a closer look identified one as a Vietnamese student and one was a severely involved multihandicapped student.

D. Achievement Information

TABLE 16.

Grade Level Achievement Data

	Above Grade Level	On Grade Level	2 Years Below Grade Level	3 Years Below Grade Level	4 Years Below Grade Level	5 or More Years Below Grade Level	Ungraded Class	No Data
Student Achievement	3	9	4	2	3	6	7	7
Percentage	7%	22%	10%	5%	7%	15%	17%	17%

Table 16 shows the relationship between grade equivelent reading scores and grade/class assignment. The data showed that 3 students or 7% were academically functioning above their grade level placement. Nine students or 22% were functioning on or about grade level. In addition, 15 students or 37% were functioning two or more years below grade level. Seven students were assigned to ungraded class assignments, and achievement data was not available for seven students. Six of the students for which no data was available had been reassigned from itinerant services to full time regular education prior to the administering of the Stanford Achievement Test - Hearing Impaired.

IV. PERSONNEL PERSPECTIVES

The third phase of the itinerant service study was to gain insight into perspectives - beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions - held by personnel both those responsible for the provision of itinerant services and those responsible for admitting students for these services.

From time to time, differences in perspectives held by ARD committee members and itinerant teachers came to the attention of program administrators. These were differences concerning the nature of student services, the role of the itinerant teacher, and the need for or lack of need for services to specific students. Precisely what these professional differences were needed to be understood since the program design for services delivery is predicated upon perceptions of needs and roles.

Members of ARD committees who referred and enrolled students for itinerant services were sent a questionnaire consisting of both specific and open ended questions. Of 62 questionnaires sent, 38 or 61.3% were returned. In addition, the five itinerant teachers included in this study were sent a parallel questionnaire and all 5 or 100% were returned.

A. ARD Committee Members Service Perspectives

The following five open ended questions were asked of ARD committee members.

1. *What sysmptoms prompt you to refer a hearing impaired student for itinerant services?*

   Of the 38 replies received, three had no response to this question. The other 35 responses contained 43 statements of symptoms which fell into 7 distinct categories:

   16 - lack of academic progress or achievement
   11 - hearing problems or failure of hearing screening tests
   5 - observation of special need and lack of LEA special services
   3 - inattentiveness or daydreaming
   3 - communication problems
   3 - poor language skills
   2 - poor speech
   3 - no response

2. *What types of <u>data</u> are used as a basis for prescribing itinerant instructional services?*

   13 - audiological assessment, achievement test, progress report, teacher recommendation, psychological evaluation, medical evaluation, speech evaluation, and language assessment
   8 - no response
   7 - audiogram, teacher recommendation, and achievement data or progress reports
   3 - audiogram and teacher recommendation
   1 - hearing screening and psychological data
   1 - audiogram, teacher recommendation, test results, and parent wishes

1 - audiogram and otological examination
1 - psychological (only)
1 - physician recommendation (only)
1 - I don't know

3. *When serving on an ARD committee for what specific services do you refer a hearing impaired student for itinerant services?*

Of the 38 replies received, four did not respond to this question.

The other 34 replies contained 104 categorical statements in 22

distinct categories:

26 - academic tutoring
18 - teacher counseling and coordination
10 - language instruction
6 - student counseling
5 - specialized materials
6 - communication skills
4 - parent services
3 - staff counseling
3 - specialized methods
3 - sign language
3 - hearing aid use
2 - educational planning
2 - assessment, testing, and diagnostics
2 - acceptance of handicap
2 - survival skills
1 - communication with student
1 - speech
1 - braille
1 - lipreading
1 - support services
1 - services to keep student mainstreamed
1 - services as directed by ARD committee

4. *What are the strengths of the itinerant program for hearing impaired students?*

All 38 respondents answered this question with 67 categorical statements

in 16 distinct categories:

16 - individualized instruction
9 - consultation to regular teacher
7 - students remaining in regular classes
7 - specialized materials and methods
4 - teacher expertise in deafness
4 - specialized support services

3 - teacher ability to communicate with student
3 - concentration on specialized population needs
3 - the itinerant teacher him/herself
2 - service to regular staff
2 - pupil planning
2 - scheduling
2 - public relations and deaf awareness
1 - keeping students near their residences
1 - language training
1 - assessment services

5. *What are the weaknesses of the itinerant program for hearing impaired students?*

Of the 38 respondents, 2 had no response, 4 listed no weaknesses,

and 32 replied with 68 categorical statements in 30 categories:

14 - not enough instructional time
11 - insufficient itinerant and classroom teacher interaction
5 - too much travel and travel time
5 - difficulty with schedules and scheduling
4 - none
3 - too large a geographical service area
3 - too many students
2 - lack of regular teacher understanding of special program services
2 - lack of inservice training program for regular teachers
2 - no response
2 - lack of administrative leadership and supervision
1 - lack of service guidelines
1 - lack of materials
1 - too many schools to serve
1 - itinerant teacher insensitive to school district
1 - itinerant teacher not understanding his/her role
1 - evaluation process too slow
1 - insufficient classroom demonstration of methods
1 - lack of participation in student staffings
1 - students not grouped
1 - lack of specific space for teaching
1 - lack of material storage
1 - not enough lipreading
1 - keeping trained itinerant teachers
1 - no feeling of belonging to any school faculty
1 - teachers teaching in non-certified subjects
1 - program is university responsive not school district or child responsive
1 - duplication of effort and money on assessment data available in district

1 - secondary students are not receptive to special services
1 - supervisor affilated with university not school district
1 - "gut level" feelings for intake procedures
1 - self-contained state school attitude of itinerant teacher

B. Itinerant Teacher's Service Perspectives

The following six open ended questions were asked of the five itinerant teachers participating in this study:

1. *When serving on an ARD committee, for what specific services do you refer a hearing impaired student for itinerant services?*

5 - tutoring
3 - teacher consultation
3 - language instruction
2 - auditory training
2 - student counseling and guidance
1 - speechreading and instruction
1 - parent services
1 - specialized methods and materials

2. *What are the strengths of the itinerant program for hearing impaired students?*

3 - tutoring students
2 - public awareness of deafness
2 - parent services
2 - services to the regular teacher
2 - student couseling
2 - keeping students mainstreamed
1 - diagnostic teaching
1 - identifying students in need
1 - amplification assistance

3. *What are the weaknesses of the itinerant program for hearing impaired students?*

2 - too much travel
2 - too little instructional time
2 - poor physical working conditions
2 - misplacement of students
2 - lack of job description
2 - weak ARD process
1 - unrealistic expectations of services by parents and school district personnel
1 - scheduling problems
1 - inability to group students for instruction

1 - lack of understanding of itinerant services by school district personnel
1 - lack of program administration
1 - difficulty in obtaining supplies

4. *Generally, please identify the services you provide within your program.*

5 - tutoring
4 - specialized teaching
4 - teacher consultation
3 - language development
3 - parent services
3 - deaf awareness and public relations
2 - student counseling
2 - speech and speechreading
1 - assessments
1 - hearing aid usage
1 - sign language
1 - mediation of differences between school district and special program

5. *What skills and knowledges from your previous training are you most using?*

4 - language development
2 - vocabulary development
2 - living skills
1 - methods of individualizing instruction
1 - communication
1 - auditory training
1 - counseling
1 - elementary education
1 - phonics

6. *What content and skill training courses should be added to teacher training programs to better prepare students to become itinerant teachers?*

3 - parent counseling
2 - language for older deaf students
2 - public school curriculum K-12
1 - school and law administration
1 - diagnostics and testing
1 - teaching English to the deaf
1 - methods of individualizing instruction
1 - phonics
1 - vocational and career education
1 - remedial reading
1 - elementary math
1 - curriculum design and planning
1 - auditory training

C. Additional Perspectives

The six following questions were asked of both groups:

1. *Are the itinerant teacher services adequate to meet the educational needs of the hearing impaired students being served?*

ARD Committee Members	Itinerant Teachers
Yes: 24	Yes: 0
No: 7	No: 0
Not Always: 2	Yes for Most Students: 5
No Response: 5	

2. *Could itinerant services be provided by teachers who are not certified in the education of the deaf such as a speech therapist or LLD teacher?*

ARD Committee Members	Itinerant Teachers
Yes: 6	Yes: 0
No: 30	No: 2
No Response: 12	Yes With Training: 2
	Yes Depending on the Person: 1

3. *Should regular or other special education personnel receive in-service training and be used as itinerant teachers of the hearing impaired?*

ARD Committee Members	Itinerant Teachers
Yes: 5	Yes: 2
No: 27	No: 2
No Response: 16	Yes Depending on the Person: 1

4. *Could itinerant students be served more effectively if they were grouped in central school sites?*

ARD Committee Members	Itinerant Teachers
Yes: 22	Yes: 5

No: 14 No: 0

No Response: 12

5. *Are itinerant services to hearing impaired students worth the effort, time, and cost?*

ARD Committee Members	Itinerant Teachers
Yes: 33	Yes: 3
No: 5	No: 1
	No Response: 1

D. Discussion

The ARD committee members generally admit hearing impaired students for itinerant services on the basis of a lack of academic progress in the regular class and the presence of a hearing loss. While a comprehensive assessment is undertaken, greater weight appears to be given to the regular teacher's recommendation for itinerant services and the student's audiogram.

There is general agreement on the services anticipated and the services actually provided to students. These are individualized academic tutoring in the student's deficiency areas; consultative services to the regular classroom teacher; specialized teaching applicable to hearing impaired students inclusive of language and communication development, specialized materials and methods, sign language, hearing aid usage; and counseling of students, parents, and regular education personnel.

It is interesting to note that speech and lipreading are identified as an instructional need by ARD committee members only once as was the need for Braille.

The ARD committee members expressed strong support for and satisfaction with the itinerant program. They viewed its strengths as academic tutoring to keep students mainstreamed and consultative services to the regular teacher. They also identified two areas in need of improvement, the first being time constraints. They felt that there was too much travel time over too large a geographical area resulting in less time for student services. The time constraints also prevented itinerant teachers from participating more fully in staff meetings and regular classroom consultations.

They also perceived a problem in the affective domain concerning the regional program staff. Specifically, the ARD committee members perceive a "them and us" attitude on the part of the component program staff, a failure to empathize with regular education and the needs of school districts and their personnel.

This perceived attitudinal problem also included component program administrators. The administrator was viewed as being affiliated with an outside entity and not responsive to school district processes of supervision, coordination, and operational guidelines.

Itinerant teachers agree that time constraints caused by travel over a large geographical area prevented more time for instruction, consultation, and produced ridged schedules. They also identified the student management process as being in need of attention. Their particular concern was that the ARD process was allowing students to be inappropriately placed for itinerant services.

Both groups agreed that the specialized training of the teacher of the deaf helped to provide the extra service needed to keep the hearing impaired student in mainstream education. While the ARD committee members felt strongly that only the teacher of the deaf could provide these services, the itinerant teachers were divided. Only 2 felt special services should be provided by a trained teacher of the deaf while the others felt that other school district personnel could be trained to provide the services which they were providing.

The strongest difference in perspective concerned the arrangements for services delivery. All of the itinerant teachers surveyed without exception expressed a preference for brining students to a central school site for services. One respondent elaborated and suggested that the itinerant teacher could better serve students at a central elementary site, central junior high school site, and a central high school site.

On the other hand, independent school district administrators (special education directors, supervisors, coordinators, principals, and assistant principals) and support personnel (counselors, diagnosticians, and speech therapists) were divided on this issue. Of the 38 responses, 14 wanted students served at their home schools and 22 wanted students served at central sites.

Respondents who suggested central sites and who elaborated on their responses, postulated that less travel time would produce more direct services and greater flexibility in the service schedule.

Many who suggested itinerant services at the students' home schools and who elaborated on their responses, postulated that the philosophy of mainstreaming students requires a normalized education environment. Students were to be served as normally as possible and that services should be provided in their home schools, the location for their education had they been non-hearing impaired. One commented that bringing the student to a central site was dealing only with the hearing handicap while bringing services to the child in his home school was dealing with the total child. In addition, others mentioned constraints against central programming such as availability of transportation, transportation time, school district policy regarding student transfers, and the neighborhood school concept.

Both groups perceived a need for the other to understand their role and the constraints under which they function. The itinerant teachers felt that regular education staff needed to know what the itinerant teacher is capable of doing. School district personnel, on the other hand, felt that itinerant teachers should become more aware of school district procedure and processes. Both groups agreed that an itinerant teacher job description and services guidelines needed to be promulgated to all concerned parties.

V. CONCLUSION

An itinerant service program for mainstreamed hearing impaired students appears to be a vital component of a comprehensive program of educational services.

Grouping itinerant students in central sites and providing them with resource services for a portion of their educational day is preferable over teachers traveling distances to several sites to serve students. More time could then be spent in direct service to students and in closer interaction with regular teachers; however, several constraints prevent this.

There are strong beliefs among parents and local school district personnel for a normalization of education for these students. They want these students served in their home schools. Itinerant teachers strongly view itinerant services as being second best to a resource program for these students. Consequently, an itinerant services program most likely is the only way these students can receive special educational services.

A composite sketch of the itinerant teacher shows that the teacher spends 22 hours or about 3/4 of a working week in 7.6 different schools serving 12 students whom the teacher visits on an average of twice a week for about two hours of weekly instructional services. The students are of all ages and are in all grades and class assignments including EMR, TMR and resource classes. In addition, while the communication preference of most students is oral/aural, the teacher is also called upon to serve students who prefer total communication, as well as the occasional student who only signs, or possesses no communication skills. The teachers actual direct services involve tutoring, teaching, and counseling. The remaining 8 hours of the work week is spent in traveling an average of 117 miles to serve these students. In addition, the teacher is called upon to provide inservice training to school district staff, consult with regular teachers, assist in student assessments, function as a resource to parents, and serve on various student management committees.

The itinerant student is of all ages and generally is in a class assignment with hearing students younger than he is. He has a preference for oral/aural communication (76%) and possesses residual hearing in the speech frequencies (66% possess better ear average hearing in the normal to moderate ranges). Academically, the itinerant student is maintaining poor progress (only 29% of the students are functioning on or above grade level). He receives deficiency tutoring from the itinerant teacher in all subjects as well as a concentration on the development of language and communication skills.

Itinerant teachers and their program administrators view a manageable itinerant teaching load differently. Teachers suggest that 12 students constitute a manageable teaching load regardless of the number of schools served or the distance traveled to serve them. Program administrators, on the other hand question quality and quanity. They suggest that the manageable teaching load is 9 (9.6) students and the difference is a matter of quantity over quality. Data supports the program administrators position. Larger student loads resulted in less direct service to individual students. Teachers with the larger loads averaged a twice weekly contact at a little over an hour with each student weekly. On the other hand, teachers with smaller teaching loads maintained the twice weekly contact with students; however, students received an average of over 2 1/2 hours of weekly instruction.

This study indicates that the itinerant teacher performs four basic functions. First, she/he is a deficiency <u>tutor</u> providing instructional services so that the student may continue to successfully compete with his normal hearing peers in regular education. Secondly, she/he is a <u>teacher</u> of the deaf, providing educational services germane to the ramifications of a hearing loss inclusive

of language and communication skill development; specialized materials and methods; and, speech, lipreading, sign language and auditory training. Thirdly, she/he is a consultant providing consultative services concerning deafness not only to the regular teacher, but also to parents and all school district personnel. The fourth major function of the itinerant teacher is publicist providing deaf awareness and positive public relations in her/his interactions as a normal by-product of the first three functions.

School district personnel view the itinerant teacher as an important and vital educational element whose function cannot be performed by anyone else. The itinerant teacher, on the other hand, views the position as marginal, often called upon to provide services in areas for which she/he has not been trained and whose functions can be performed by other school district personnel after a period of inservice training. The itinerant teacher feels alienated, not belonging to any particular school facility and faculty, doing a job which she/he believes can be better accomplished in another educational arrangement.

The itinerant teachers' beliefs are somewhat supported by data. Some district personnel, while supportive of the itinerant teacher, do somewhat project a "them and us" attitude. They percieve the itinerant teacher as part of an outside entity who comes into the school, provides a service, and then departs.

This attitude was also identified among several itinerant teachers. They too were projecting a "them and us" attitude and viewed some school district personnel as not understanding nor appreciating the itinerant teacher and itinerant services.

This attitudinal problem appears to originate with a lack of communication and interaction between some component program personnel and some school district personnel.

Recommendations

1. If possible, students should be brought to central school sites and provided with resource services for a portion of the school day as needed to maintain them successfully in the regular classroom.

2. When services are to be provided on an itinerant basis, all involved district and school personnel should receive indepth orientation to:

   a. the educational nature of deafness
   b. the cascade of services available to a hearing impaired student
   c. the training of and service capability of a teacher of the deaf
   d. the role and functions of an itinerant teacher

3. The itinerant load should be no more than 10 students served at least twice a week for no less than 2 hours weekly.

4. Itinerant teachers should be supervised by the deaf education program more closely and provided with resources, assistance, and guidance so that their services may be maximized.

5. Explicit job descriptions should be developed for the itinerant teacher and promulgated to all concerned personnel within both the public school district and the special program.

6. Itinerant teachers should be assigned a specific location as a teaching station in each school.

7. ARD committees should involve the itinerant teacher when considering itinerant services for a hearing impaired student.

8. ARD committees should obtain all appraisal information gathered by personnel competent in deafness prior to meeting and that standardized and specialized achievement data be given priority over regular teacher progress reports.

9. Teacher training colleges and universities should investigate the possibility of and need for the speciality of itinerant teacher of the deaf with additional specialized courses to develop skills, knowledges, and competencies in the areas of:

a. human relations
b. counseling (parent, student, staff) and group dynamics
c. child and adolescent psychology
d. public school organization and administration
e. public school curriculum
f. diagnostics and assessment of hearing impaired students
g. learning disabilities

10. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to determine the effect of itinerant services on student achievement.

11. This study should be replicated in other areas of the country to verify its findings.

* ranges used at the Callier Center for Communication Disorders, Dallas, Texas